

-Harvey Carroll, Retiree, Kingsborough

I loved your December issue of the Retirees Newsletter. I too have looked at manhole covers in NYC and the Seattle area, and am attaching a picture of one I took in Kirkland, WA today. Kirkland is a small upscale city near the northeast end of Lake Washington. As you can see, they take their manhole covers very seriously. The artwork attempts to describe the nature of the city. Note that it is made in the USA!



The answer to the pop quiz: Manhole covers are round so they can't fall into the hole they cover when tipped vertically (note that there is a small ledge that holds them in place, making the diameter of the hole slightly smaller than the diameter of the cover. If they were square, they could fall into the hole at a diagonal, or else the ledge would have to make the hole too small to get into, at least with the current size of holes—just big enough for workers to climb in and out.

When I saw my first manhole cover in NYC that said "Made in China," I was really upset.

By the way, in Washington State, a few years ago they wanted to make all official words gender neutral. One of the few they could not figure out how to do this with was "manhole," mainly for safety reasons. Emergency workers might get confused if they were called something like "drain covers" or "sewer covers" or "person covers" and this could delay a rescue.

### A Research Question

**Professor Lilia Melani** of the English Department of Brooklyn College is researching the student movement and union activism at Brooklyn College in the 1930s and 1940s, the Rapp-Coudert investigation of BC students and faculty in 1940-41, and the HUAC investigation of BC students and faculty in the early 1950s. If you know any students, faculty, or staff who were at the College between 1930 and 1956 and might be willing to be interviewed, please let her know. She can be contacted at the Brooklyn College English Department, at [lmelani@brooklyn.cuny.edu](mailto:lmelani@brooklyn.cuny.edu), or at 212-369-7672.

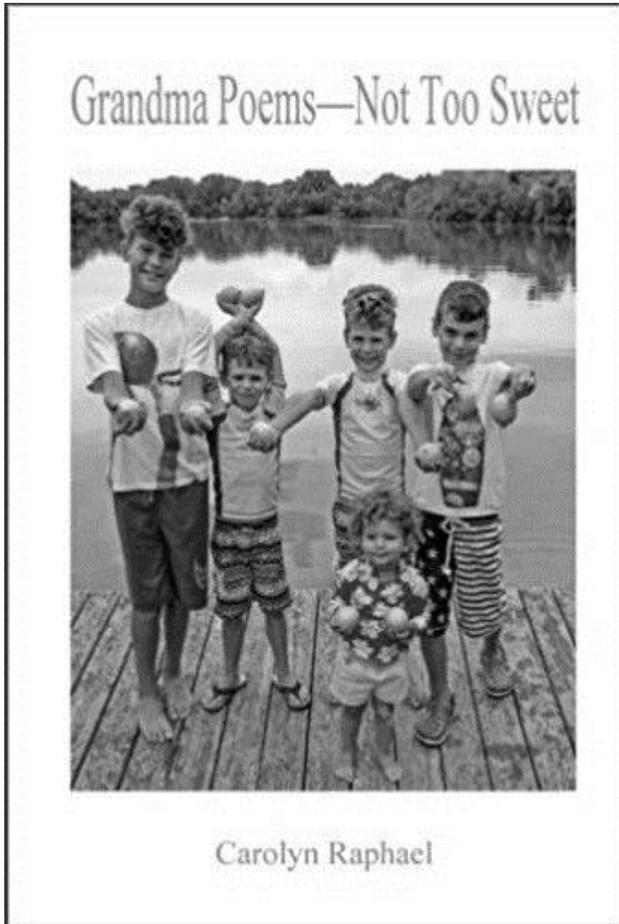
### A New Book

**Carolyn Raphael** writes: After teaching at Queensborough Community College for thirty-seven years in the English Department, I retired to publish my poetry. My fourth book has just come out, *Grandma Poems—Not Too Sweet*. My friends and colleagues are raving about it. For example X. J. Kennedy a poet, novelist, and children's author says:

As its title indicates, you won't find any saccharine platitudes about grandmothering in Carolyn Raphael's arresting new collection. She gives us sharp-eyed views of actual grandmas and their grandchildren, and captures perfectly the wistfulness of infrequent visits over a distance of 800 miles. These poems

will hold special interest for anyone who has ever had a grandma, or been one, and yet will appeal to all readers who care for skilled poetry, memorable and true to life.

**Grandma Stories—Not Too Sweet**, by Carolyn Raphael is available on Amazon.com.



## Outing My Age

As big as life—the numbers of my years flash purple on his homemade birthday card.

I praise the artist for their perfect shape.

The next blow is his declaration that I'm five years older than his other grandma (subtraction lesson in his first-grade class).

To practice sums, he slowly calculates—

*When I'm eighteen, then you'll be 82,*

*and when I'm 30, you'll be...94.*

I sit down as my decades flutter by,  
afraid to tell my chronicler to stop.

-Carolyn Raphael

*Grandma Poems—Not Too Sweet*

Kelsay Books/ Aldrich Press, 2017.

# Booktalk



**Talk by David Kotelchuck:** PSC Retiree Chapter member David Kotelchuck will be talking at Tamiment Library on Tuesday, March 6 from 4:30–6 PM about his book on the FBI persecution of his parents during the Cold War: "Abe and Julia: Honor and Survival during Hoover's Reign." Tamiment is located on the 10<sup>th</sup> floor of NYU Bobst Library, [70 Washington Square South](#). All are welcome.